

TULSI GABBARD  
2ND DISTRICT, HAWAII

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-1102**

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May 4, 2018

William B. "Brock" Long  
Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C Street SW  
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Administrator Long:

I am writing to bring your urgent attention to the multiple earthquakes and subsequent volcanic eruption threatening the health, well-being, and safety of the residents and visitors of Hawai'i Island. On May 3, 2018, the U.S. Geological Survey recorded several earthquakes, including one with a magnitude of 5.0, on Hawai'i Island; thereafter, Mt. Kilauea erupted, spewing ash and lava. Shortly after, Governor David Y. Ige declared a disaster emergency and activated the Hawai'i National Guard while the Hawai'i County Civil Defense called for a mandatory evacuation of all residents of the Leilani Estates and Lanipuna Gardens subdivisions on Hawai'i Island. There have been two subsequent eruptions within these communities, causing house fires and further evacuations.

I urge you to coordinate with Hawai'i authorities in conducting a Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) to determine the damage and resulting needs of individuals, businesses, public sector, and community as a whole resulting from these incidents. As you know, volcanic ash can contaminate water supplies, create smog and harmful gases, damage infrastructure, and harm agriculture, in addition to traveling hundreds of miles, potentially reaching our neighbor islands. The immediate physical effects can include difficulty breathing, skin, eye, nose, and throat irritation, and exacerbation of pre-existing respiratory diseases, such as asthma. In addition, the flow of lava can cause wildfires and other physical destruction.

I fully support the Hawai'i County Civil Defense, as well as the police and fire departments, and other partners, who have provided immediate assistance to the residents and visitors of Hawai'i Island, in addition to the Red Cross emergency shelters that were opened at the Keaau Community Center and the Pahoia Community Center.

I ask for your rapid attention and response to the Mt. Kilauea volcano eruption and the associated short and long term housing, infrastructure, agriculture, and public health effects to Hawai'i Island. Similar to 2014 when FEMA provided emergency assistance funding for the Pu'u 'Ō'ō volcanic eruption on Hawai'i Island, we may need your assistance following the recent eruption of Mt. Kilauea. Please contact me if there is any way that I can help move this process forward. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,



Tulsi Gabbard  
Member of Congress